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AUTHOR	Fusch, Gene E.
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ABSTRACT

From their beginnings, community colleges have evolved and continually improved their mission to better serve community residents. Previously, two-year colleges were mainly private institutions, committed to occupational and professional preparation, general education, and academic transfer. After 1965, legislation provided federal funds to colleges, allowing great increases in enrollment. Two-year colleges evolved from mere extensions of high school to collegiate junior colleges, then to complex governance and funding structures, and finally to comprehensive community colleges that emphasize educational quality and diversity. During its early years, the community college's role was unclear, with some emphasizing liberal arts and transfer to four-year institutions, and others focusing on vocational and technical training. Presently, both American and Canadian community colleges are reevaluating their institutional missions, emphasizing open access for everyone--especially disadvantaged groups. They are developing curricula, improving articulation agreements, and addressing governance and funding issues. For the 21st century, the community college's vision is to restructure into a new four-year institution, focus on workforce training, utilize the information highway, pursue partnership opportunities, and enhance access while sustaining academic transfer, vocational training, community service, and special needs. Contains 35 references. (YKH)

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Gene E. Fusch

University of British Colombia

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The Community College of the Twenty-first Century

by

Gene E. Fusch

University of British Columbia

Abstract

This paper provides perspectives on community colleges as they prepare for the twenty-first century. Through the conceptual framework, this paper defines and explicates the community college, reviews its history and changing mission, and illuminates the changing expectations of students and the populus. Analyzing the public demand for access to educational in addition to the financial and political influences, this paper suggests a vision for the community college of the twenty-first century.

Introduction

> *And now the community college movement indeed is sweeping the United States. There are more than a hundred community colleges in California alone. And enrollment is exploding everywhere, because community colleges fill a need to strengthen the communities, to strengthen people's individual dreams, and to help them build successful families (Bill Clinton, 1996).*

President Clinton's address portrays an ideological and respected vision of the community college shared by much of the American populus. However, despite some consensus, the community college has struggled to define its role and mission in the American higher education arena since its inception a century ago. Debate over a clear purpose and identity has plagued much of the community colleges' history. The community college open door policy has led to its successes and failures while providing

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ambiguity and contradiction. Indeed, the community college, through its open door policy (allowing all Americans access), has served as the backbone of higher education.

Debate perplexed the history of the community college, likewise, controversy will continue to afflict future direction and mission of the community college. It is these future challenges and mission of the community college that this paper will explore. In particular, the argument presented in this paper will suggest potential roles for the American community college during the first part of the twenty-first century. To establish the groundwork for such an argument, this paper will provide a definition of the American community college, look at its history and changing mission, and illuminate the changing expectations of students and the populus. Inasmuch as the comprehensive community college is unique to the United States and Canada, this paper will reference related Canadian and, more specifically, British Columbia's community colleges.

In Canada the community college emerged during the second half of the twentieth century. The MacDonald report led to the implementation of community colleges in British Columbia. This report illuminated the importance of postsecondary education vis-à-vis community colleges and stated that "[h]uman resources are our most important asset for tomorrow. The nation making inadequate use of its citizens through failure to educate them will be a nation doomed to economic distress at best, and economic disaster at worst" (MacDonald, 1962, p. 6, In Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 28).

The Community College Definition

The American community college is a two-year postsecondary institution that awards the Associate in Arts or the Associate in Science as its highest degree (Cohen &

Brawer 1996). In the United States the Associate Degree is a two-year college degree above high school grade twelve. Other two-year college degrees, which are vocational in nature and usually not transferable to four year colleges, include: Associate in Applied Science, Associate in Applied Technology, and Associate in Technology.

The Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science commonly provide the curriculum requirements for articulation agreements between universities and community colleges. Through these articulation agreements, universities accept the degrees in fulfillment of the general university requirements (GUR) for the first two years of university study.

Evolution of the Comprehensive Community College

At its genesis a century ago, the two-year college was a predominantly private institution committed to occupational, professional preparation, and general education as well as providing academic transfer programs. Since its noble beginning, the community college has evolved into a predominantly public institution providing educational opportunities for virtually all Americans (Cohen, 1994, p. 36).

Until the mid 1960s, two-year colleges, primarily referred to as junior colleges, were often university branch campuses, part of secondary school districts, or formed by community groups. After 1965, new legislation provided federal funds and prompted major changes in the two-year college. This banner legislation included the *National Defense Education Act* (NDEA) and *Higher Education Act* (HEA). These Acts were instrumental in expanding community college enrollments. This legislation initiated a

national program for student grants and loans to attend postsecondary institutions (Cohen, 1994).

Cohen (1994) reported that in 1975-76, two-year colleges received $420 million, which was 8% of the federal allocation for higher education. By 1984-85, the federal allocation was $1.4 billion, which was 10% of the federal allocation for higher education. The NDEA and HEA, in addition to the *Civil Rights Act* and the *Vocational Education Act* (VEA) were pivotal in changing the role and governance of the community college.

Stemming from the new federal funding provided by these Acts in the mid 1960s, the community college experienced unregulated expansion and control (Alfred & Smydra, 1985). This led to changes in community college governance toward new or existing higher education systems at the State level and often with local governing boards. Martorana and Kuhns (1985) note that as early as 1972, most states had implemented state agencies responsible for coordinating statewide planning. Cohen & Brawer (1996) found that in the 1970s California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Michigan, and Washington had elaborate state community college systems.

After these changes in governance, the two-year colleges were predominantly called community colleges. However, to elucidate what a community or two year college is in the United States, one often has to sift through nomenclature employed in various parts of the country. Alternative names for the community college include junior college, city college, county college, branch campus, technical college, vocational or technical institute, and adult education or training centers. Cohen & Brawer (1996) list other names for the community college, including people's college, democracy college, and anti-university college.

Tillery and Deegan (1985) provide a framework of five generations of the evolution of the two-year community college.

- In the first generation the two-year colleges were an extension of high school. (1900-1930)
- The second generation saw the emergence of the collegiate junior colleges. (1930-1950)
- The community college emerged during the third generation with complex governance and funding structures. (1950-1970)
- The fourth generation introduced the comprehensive community college (1970-mid 1980s).
- Tillery and Deegan projected that in the fifth generation the community college would retain the comprehensive mission and emphasize quality and diversity for the populus.

Cohen (1972) reported that most states adhere to a formula whereas, they build community colleges within 25 commuting miles of 90% to 95% of the population. Using this formula, Cohen indicated that America needed 1,074 community colleges to effectively serve the populus. After nine decades Cohen (1994) reported that America exhibits 1250 community colleges and as a result of legislative politics, there are community colleges in every U.S. legislative district in every state.

Less systematic in uniformity than the U.S. community colleges, Canada's community college arrived on the scene as late as 1960s and 70s. Dennison (1995) reported that by 1994 Canada displayed 150 community colleges with over 700 satellite campuses.

Although the United States (as well as Canada) is unique in forming a comprehensive community college system, the individual states govern the colleges through different strategies, policies, funding arrangements, and plans. Even though there have been monumental endeavors, Cohen & Brawer (1996) state that the diversity in governance and control has led to legislative confusion, directional changes, and poor planning. Furthermore, lack of authority for state level leadership has attributed to poor policy planning, direction, and strategic growth in the community college.

The Changing Community College Role and Mission

"The early junior college mission [was] an amalgam of transfer, general education, and occupational education" (Cohen, 1994, p. 32). Early advocates and students of the community college saw it as a way into higher education. However, the community college fell short and failed to provide the transfer to the university for many who aspired to a baccalaureate degree. "Yet if the early leaders of the junior college were in many ways idealist who were almost missionary in their zeal to spread the blessings of education to the masses, they were also practical men who faced the difficult task of guaranteeing institutional survival in the complex organizational ecology of American higher education" (Brint, & Karabel, 1989, p. 215).

During the early years of the community college, many community college leaders emphasized the liberal arts and promoted their institutions as genuine colleges that articulate to four year colleges and universities. In contrast, many entrepreneurial leaders advocated terminal vocational training for industry as an alternative to a liberal education (Brint, & Karabel, 1989). Cohen (1994) reported that by 1970, the community college

mission had evolved to encompass academic transfer, vocational and technical training, community service courses, and student services, such as daycare. These offerings in the new comprehensive community college not only improved opportunities and access for the populus; it enhanced student mobility within the community college (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Debate and controversy over identity and mission perplexed the history of community college, along with the entrepreneurial innovations and search for new training and student markets and funding. To add to the discussion, economic development concerns led policymakers in state governments to limit enrollments in liberal arts and transfer funding to terminal vocational training in order to resolve issues of high unemployment (Brint, & Karabel, 1989).

Canadian community college roles and missions vary between Provincial systems resembling the debates over the role and mission in the U.S. community college. Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Québec have established missions and identity within the postsecondary educational system, whereas, the newer systems in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the territories are working to develop a stable role and identity within the higher education arena. (Dennison, 1995)

In Hollinshead's discourse in 1936, he espoused that the community college should endeavor foremost in meeting community needs by offering adult education, recreational, vocational training, or cultural facilities for the community. (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Such debates continue to dominate the community college arena with emphasis on new issues of access for socially, culturally, and physically disadvantaged groups.

Community colleges are rethinking their role and mission, and means to meet the needs of the populus and provide access to disadvantaged groups. One such example is the new mission statement for Shoreline Community College in Seattle, Washington, USA:

> To achieve its mission, Shoreline Community College upholds the principles of success for each student, the dignity of every individual, strength through diversity, and collaborative decision-making. Committed to a standard of excellence, the College measures its effectiveness by the achievements of its students, the strength of its faculty and staff, and the support of its community (Shoreline Community College, 1997).

Student Demographics, Access, and the Changing Emphasis.

Access is an issue foremost on the agenda of most American community college leaders and policymakers. Indeed, the government augmented open access through initiatives such as *Welfare-to-Work*, *Dislocated Workers* retraining programs, *American Disabilities Act*, *Tech-Prep*, etc. Canada is also addressing issues of access, such as the *Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia* report in 1988 that addressed problems of access for First Nations people, persons with disabilities, and incarcerated persons within the prisons (Dennison, 1995).

Never before have so many Americans had the opportunity to a higher education. "Two years of post-secondary education are within reach—financially, geographically, practically—of virtually every American. Two generations have passed since President Truman's Commission on Higher Education recommended that the door to higher education be swung open" (Cohen & Brawer, 1996, p. 31). In fact, in 1992, 5,485,512 students were enrolled in America's community colleges, of which 3,567,796 or 65% of

the students attended part time (National Center for education Statistics, 1994a, Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Of these five and one-half million community college students, the mean age is over thirty-one, with a median age of twenty-five. The community college enrollments comprise of 39% of the total enrollments in American higher education. Community colleges in 1991 recorded demographics statistics identifying enrollments of 47% ethnic minority students and 47% female students. Sixty-six percent of the female students attend community college part time as compared to sixty percent of the male students (National Center for education Statistics, 1993, Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

In 1989-1990, one third of the students in their first year of community college received an average package of $2,000 in federal financial aid (National Center for education Statistics, 1994b, Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Dennison (1995) reports that Canada's community colleges are meeting diversity challenges of access for First Nations peoples, retraining for displaced workers, persons with disabilities, adults lacking basic skills, and immigrants needing English as a second language. To address these challenges, the new Advanced Education Council of British Columbia released a report in 1992 called *Access for Equity and Opportunity*. Dennison (1995) summarized its recommendations:

- the system be expanded to include an additional 28,000 funded Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) spaces over the next five years
- priority be given to the expansion of technical and vocational training programs in areas of documented need
- attention be given to regional inequities and places for disabled, special needs, and multicultural communities (p. 17).

Innovative changes resulted from the *Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia* report. The report ranked British Columbia ninth in Canada for students completing degrees vis-à-vis its population. British Columbia had three universities, fifteen colleges, and five specialized institutes, including the Open Learning Agency. Resulting from the Access Report was the conversion of some of the community colleges into University Colleges. "The university-college was a new concept in post-secondary education in that, in offering degree completion programs, it attempts to introduce into one institution characteristics of both the university and the community college" (Dennison, 1995, p. 16). This phenomenon is exclusive to British Columbia.

It is likely that discussions regarding new challenges and directions for the community colleges will focus on open access (and funding) issues in the immediate future. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the typical worker will hold an average of seven jobs through three careers, and that future emphasis should include improving the status of vocational education by building partnerships with business. While retraining for dislocated workers continues as a major economic issue, struggles and tensions between earning academic credits for transfer to four year institutions, vocational training, adult basic education, and community service will continue (Griffith and Connor, 1994).

Yet, throughout the ongoing debate over access and emphasis, the community college was instrumental in providing access to higher education for many people, even those students that had low academic achievement in high school (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Curriculum

Beyond the debate between academic programs for transfer to four year colleges and vocational or technical training, the American comprehensive community college provides continuing education, remedial education, and community service. Resulting from the open door and access initiatives, these community colleges provide adult education for students weak in basic skills or the knowledge necessary for entrance or completion of college programs or the immigrant student who needs English as a second language or preparation for American society.

To meet these needs, community colleges offer programs such as adult basic education for students below the 8th grade level in general academic knowledge; general education development for students below the 12th grade level in general academic knowledge; English as a second language for immigrant students who are weak in reading, writing, or speaking English; individualized tutorial programs in specific subject areas where students may need improvement; and special needs instruction for socially disadvantaged and handicapped students.

Canadian community colleges provide similar programs to meet the needs of a diverse population. Projecting future needs, Cumming (1991) reported, that with current Canadian immigration levels, 140,000 adults will need English as a second language and over 80% will need adult basic skills (Cumming 1991, Dennison, 1995).

Transfer to Four Year Institutions

Cohen & Brawer (1996) note that the average articulation to four-year American colleges and universities for most states that have comprehensive college systems is

around 22% of the community college graduates pursuing transfer degrees, with articulation for different states ranging from 11% and 40%. They suggest two explanations for the difference in transfer rate. That transfer rates result from community demographics, economic and employment conditions, and geographical proximity of the college to a university campus. The second elucidation results from state legislatures and state higher education system policies, whereas, when state funding and initiatives emphasize vocational and technical training there is a reduction in the transfer rate. In contrast, when policies limit student enrollments, community college administrators reduce the higher cost vocational training options and the transfer rate increases.

Adelman (1988) used the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Graduating Class of 1972 and noted that from the students entering two-year colleges, 20% transferred two a four year college. Yet, from studies such as Warren's (1995) review of Friedlander (1980) with less than 10% articulation, Eckland and Henderson's (1981) assertion that one quarter of community college entrances may ultimately articulate, Alba and Lavin's (1981) study of the two-year campus of City University in New York where 40% of the students went on two the third year, and Sheldon's (1983) study of the California community college students in which 9.5% had transferred three years later, it is difficult to generalize on student transfer rates to four year institutions.

This phenomenon of academic transfer from a comprehensive community college to a university as a third year student (junior) is a particular characteristic of the U.S. higher education system. This phenomenon emerged to some extent from influence of governmental initiatives and a benefit to universities for admitting fewer first year students. Both these suppositions have influenced articulation from the community

college to four year colleges and universities, though the predominant argument stems from indirect federal legislation that advocated self governing accrediting bodies. The decisions over articulation agreements are established by volunteer consortiums and state governing bodies and though they appear universal, four year colleges and universities outside the articulation agreements areas may evaluate the student's transcript by individual courses. In most cases, four year institutions will only accept transfer students from accredited institutions. Besides institutional enhancement and recognition, these accrediting bodies provide:

> assistance in the transfer of credits between institutions or the admission of students to advanced degrees through the general acceptance of credits among accredited institutions when the performance of the student has been satisfactory and the credits to be transferred are appropriate to the receiving institution (Commission on Colleges, 1992, p. 108).

There is one regional institutional accrediting association and five regional institutional accrediting commissions approved for overall accreditation of institutions (Office of Postsecondary Education, 1997). In the U.S., universities and colleges normally accept transfer credits from institutions accredited through these self-governing accreditation bodies. In addition, there are twenty National Institutional and Specialized Accrediting Bodies that include medical, dental, religious, and occupational accrediting associations. It is noteworthy that the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada accredits both U.S. and Canadian institutions (Office of Postsecondary Education, 1997).

The Canadian system does not have accrediting bodies nor does it provide the opportunities for students to transfer from community colleges to universities as seen in U.S. higher education. In Canada, colleges are under the diverse jurisdiction of the ten

Provincial and two Territorial systems. Skolnik (1992) highlighted that "[i]n British Columbia and Alberta, the feeder role is played by junior and community colleges, similar to those in the United States, which offer courses for which transfer credit is granted by the universities" (p.16). Transfer arrangements in British Columbia have improved over the past twenty years, and "articulation among institutions is improving gradually" (Dennison, 1995, p. 25).

Governance and Funding

It is appropriate that governance and funding be combined in examining the American comprehensive community college. Funding models are complex and there are often substantial allocations to colleges within a system. Predominantly the states use a full-time-equivalent (FTE) student formula in addition to minimum foundation plans, cost-based funding models and special program funding. Funding for particular groups of students that may provide tuition only or tuition and some method of program funding, along with grants, contracts, and partnerships with other agencies add to the confusion of funding models. Diversity between state systems and the inconsistencies of funding within a state system make generalizing difficult (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

The continual shift of support between tuition, local taxes, and state revenues has created a dilemma for community college funding (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Issues such as California's Proposition 13 and similar legislation on tax increase in several other states, including Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, and Washington, have limited tax and/or tuition increases to percentage of taxes or consumer price indexes. These changing patterns have affected the funding for community colleges. Such legislation has major

effects on fiscal budgets, since in many states with large community college system the colleges receive 75% or more of their funds from the state (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

These issues have led to entrepreneurial community college leaders developing alternative methods of funding through commercial endeavors, business partnerships, international training, and establishing foundations. (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). This is unlike Canadian community colleges in that, although they may seek private support and tuition, "the burden of fiscal support for all forms of education has been borne largely by the public purse" (Dennison, 1995, p. 8).

To meet these new fiscal challenges, American community colleges have sought an increasing availability of grant funding from the federal government for specific education and training projects, such as Title II and Title III Grants for programs such as economically disadvantaged workers, retraining for dislocated workers, training for upgrading, advance career training, literacy and bi-lingual training, high school equivalency, basic skills training, and on the job training (American Vocational Association, 1995), Perkins Act, Welfare-to-Work, the U. S. Joint Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and training programs funded through the Department of Labor, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, National Science Foundation, and other federal granting agencies. The federal government has developed a strategic role in influencing community college decisions on education and training policy by stipulating conditions on funding (Skilbeck, Cornell, Lowe, & Taib, 1994; Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1989).

Cohen and Brawer (1996) acknowledge governance issues related to the funding arrangements:

> The problem is not merely one of decision-making authority between colleges and the state board; it relates also to other state agencies. Washington, for example, has a state board and thirty[-two] distinct district boards. In addition, executive orders from the governor; directives from the Office of Financial Management; and contractual controls, legal options, and audits stemming from numerous state agencies" (p. 115-116).

Cohen & Brawer (1996) also point out that community colleges in Washington are reporting to as many as 30 outside third-party agencies in one way or another.

Even though the federal government has mandated that minorities, women, and people with disabilities gain access to higher education, influenced affirmative action hiring practices, and funded programs with attached conditions, the individual states have more authority over postsecondary education (Cohen and Brawer, 1996).

The primary governing authority as identified by Tollefson and Fountain in their 1992 survey of forty-nine state systems revealed that state boards of education, state boards of higher education, community college boards, and public university systems govern community colleges. Maine's Technical College System governs the states technical colleges; In South Dakota, local school districts govern the technical colleges; and in Vermont, an independent corporation governs adult and vocational schools (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Analogously, in Canada colleges are under the diverse jurisdiction of the ten Provincial and two Territorial systems (Skolnik, 1992).

Griffith and Connor (1994) state that even though community college faculty contend with extensive challenges that include a diverse student population with more diversified levels of preparation, lower pay and status than the four year institutions, community college faculty show dedication and satisfaction in their jobs. However, faculty collective bargaining associations introduce additional perspectives in community college decision-making

arena. The National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers are the primary faculty unions and represent 100,000 or 60% of American community college faculty (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

New Directions for the 21st Century.

Social scientists have envisioned five predominant directions for the American community college of the twenty-first century. These concepts include restructuring the community college to a new four year institution, shifting from a comprehensive mission to a vocational focus or workforce training, implementing a college without walls and utilizing the information highway, aggressively pursuing international and corporate partnership opportunities, and enhancing access while sustaining academic transfer, vocational training, community service, and special needs.

In supporting his argument for transforming larger community colleges into four-year colleges or into university branch extensions, Dougherty (1994) states that one third of community college students aspire to a baccalaureate degree and charges community colleges with "cooling out" students' baccalaureate aspirations, whereas, they should endeavor to "warm up" students' baccalaureate aspirations. However, as Goffman (1952) points out, "cooling represents a process of adjustment to an impossible situation," and the student who does not possess the standards required for university education may be able to refocus aspirations on obtainable goals (p. 456).

Dougherty (1994) addresses several of the advantages and disadvantages of converting community colleges into four year colleges. He questions (as British Columbia's new University Colleges are currently exploring) whether these new four-year colleges would aspire

to develop graduate programs or be content to remain four-year colleges. Considering the magnitude of the cost, he revises his argument to suggest that community colleges be converted into two-year university branches (Dougherty, 1994, p. 264).

The second argument reviews the utilitarian debate that plagued the history of the community college. Identifying the need for workforce training, Parnell (1985) states that in most high schools, 25% of the students are in the college prep track and will go on to some college, another 25% of the students are involved in vocational courses that prepare them to enter the workforce, and the remaining 50% are receiving "general education" that neither prepares them for college nor for work. Parnell refers to these students as the "neglected majority" and explains that in many high schools the neglected majority may be closer to 70% of the students. Utilitarian advocates cite these inequities for opportunity in the American education system and look at the community college as the remedy. The economic and political pressure to enhance workforce training was evident in the Tech-Prep initiatives (Hull & Parnell, 1991).

Viewing the community college as the foundation of national economic prosperity, the demand for workforce training, and access for disadvantaged groups, the government has initiated numerous workforce training and retraining programs, such as *Tech-Prep*, *Welfare-to-Work*, *Dislocated Workers Program*, and the *Perkins Act*, that provide funding for many of the workforce training and retraining programs.

The third vision explores new paradigms and educational approaches. Coastline in California, Rio Salado in Arizona, and the Community College of Vermont, are experiential institutions pertaining to "colleges without walls," in which, faculty travel to the students at leased sites throughout the community. Through the information highway,

innovative community colleges are designing methods for distance learning strategies (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). However, the information highway vision may hinder access to the populus, in particular, as a result of financial restrictions and conflicting learning styles.

Fourth, some entrepreneurial community colleges leaders are developing international partnerships and training throughout the world. In particular, community colleges are developing alliances in Japan and the Asian Pacific Rim (Butera, 90). Other strategies pursue a privatization model that enhances corporate education and customized training partnerships (Israel, 1994). Although these innovations may relieve financial distress, one may suggest that they should not occupy the predominate role and mission of the comprehensive community college, and the college should consider them part of the college's outreach and community service.

Finally, the community college of the future mission will emphasize "providing access, sustaining the liberal arts and transfer programs, providing occupational education, and meeting community needs" (Cohen, 1994, p. 39).

In Canada, as in U.S. community colleges, access is a major issue, along with academic, vocational training, adult basic skills and English as second language, and community service. Dennison (1995) notes that the need for a nation wide network or uniform system is a significant issue and is exclusive to the Canadian community college.

Community colleges are striving to increase efficiency for student learning and serve more students for less. However, "increased production in one area might lead to a decrease in another; for example, success in attracting different types of students to community colleges might increase the cost of instruction" (Cohen & Brawer, 1996, pp. 134-135). Consequently, following the lead of business leaders, community college

administrators have explored and implemented measures using Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), Program Planning and Budget System (PPBS), Management by Objectives (MBO), and Total Quality Management (TQM), to improve quality and numbers of students served (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

It is apparent that debate and ambiguity over identity and mission influenced the history of the community college, and that the debate will continue into the future. The future predictions stemmed from improving access and retaining the academic transfer programs, vocational education, and community service to arguments favoring academic four-year colleges, workforce training, and entrepreneurial partnerships and innovative approaches vis-à-vis technology and decentralized strategies. All these predictions are monumental, are not exhaustive, and in consideration of the diversity across the nation, may occur in the decades to come.

From its genesis, the community college evolved and continually improved its role and mission. The community college responded to public demand for access to educational, financial, and political influences. The history suggests that as the community college enters the twenty-first century there will not be wholesale changes; rather, community colleges will exist in an environment of ongoing fiscal restraints with demands for access and service.

The community college will retain its comprehensive mission and emphasize quality and diversity in programs and services. The community college of the future will provide access and continue the open door policy, develop innovative approaches for program offerings, ingeniously design strategies for fluctuating funding, develop stronger communication with the whole community, and follow industry models to restructure,

develop a shared vision within the college community, and strive for continual improvement.

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About the Author

Gene Fusch is a third year Ph.D. student in the Higher Education Program at the University of British Columbia. His research encompasses work organization, motivation and learning at the workplace.

Along with pursuing his doctoral research, he is the Coordinator of Trades and Technology at Bellingham Technical College in Bellingham Washington, USA. At Bellingham Technical College, he supervises the apprenticeship programs, develops and manages industry upgrade courses and technology degree programs. He specializes in consulting and implementing customized training courses for industry. He is responsible for 90 full-time and adjunct faculty that teach 120 to 140 competency based courses each quarter.